

He flashed the light to and fro, till every portion of the room was brought into view.

"It was entirely empty!"

"He was not brought here," said the chief, angrily.

"He was brought here; I can swear to it," said one of the men; "to this very room."

"I saw him put in," added Hilda, "and the door fast locked outside."

"But, woman, you see for yourself he's not here," testily replied the chief.

"And he could not have gotten forth," added the dame, embarrassed what to think.

"Search the other rooms," thundered Kenneth, in a rage at the disappearance of the prisoner. "Not a trace of the seer could be found in any of the rooms. The wonder was great, and several avowed their belief that Mat was a wizard."

"How else could he go forth?" suggested Hilda. "Will never a window to put his head through?"

The confusion in the castle and around it left no time for conjecture or questioning. The soldiers were outside; and they had demanded admittance in the king's name.

Gregory, who was spokesman in the absence of Kenneth, responded by requiring to know what had brought them at that hour to invade the dwelling of a man who had given no cause for a show of violence against him.

The leading officer of the troops rode within speech of Gregory, who stood upon one of the balconies. He said he and his men had been summoned and sent to the assistance of the revenue men, who had reported the capture of their commander. He had been missing since before dusk, and was supposed to be held a prisoner in the castle. He must be instantly released, or the attack would be made to force an entrance and deliver the captive.

Kenneth came forward at this juncture, and loudly declared that no prisoner was held within the castle; and that no enemy should be admitted to search.

There was a stunning clamor of voices at this; the soldiers shouting that they did not believe him, and calling their comrades to the rescue; the adherents of Kenneth giving orders, and running to and fro in wild disorder. The chief's orders to bolt and barricade the entrances were obeyed, and preparations were hurriedly made to resist the attack. In vain some of the men urged that the soldiers be permitted to make the search and then retire; it was answered that they claimed the right also to quarter themselves all night, and make a search for smuggled stores on the morrow, perhaps to arrest the whole household as suspected participants. There was no limit to the freedom claimed by a body of soldiers in possession; and a man's own house was his stronghold.

In the midst of the wild disorder Hilda made her way to Kenneth, and laid hold of his arm. He turned quickly; the woman's face was white as death, and her lips trembled; she had some evil news to communicate. She gasped, almost breathless, in her master's ear:

"He is dying; he will be dead ere dawn; save yourself!"

"Speak plainly, woman; or else stand aside!" was the hasty response.

"The lad, Malcolm—he came from Mat, the seer—"

"What of him? Has the devil carried him off? Why came ye speak out?"

"The man who fell frae the cliff; Mat took him home. He is hurt to the death! 'Twill sune be known, if 'tis not already! Master, master, save yourself! Leave the castle the storm is 'bating; 'twill pull the house round, and fetch ye wi' the dawn; ye can hide in the cave! There is a vessel nigh the coast at anchor."

She poured forth her entreaties with frenzied earnestness; and Kenneth saw at once the danger in which he stood. His stubborn will, however forbade him to yield.

"I will not fly, nor hide, this night!" he cried, hoarsely. "I will hold the castle till dawn, and then baffle them! Where is Herrick?"

Hilda wrung her hands in terror and anguish. Better than life she loved her master, and to find him so foolishly tortured her.

"Herrick! I will find him! He may persuade ye, Sir Kenneth! Woe is me, he heeds not words of mine!"

Turning he sped from the place in search of help, but staggered against the wall in horror at the next sound that met her ears.

With his own hands Kenneth lighted the fuse of the cannon on his ramparts. The roar shook the castle, and though no harm resulted among the besiegers, the formidable sound created a panic, showing that their purpose would not be accomplished without bloodshed and loss of life. The silence that ensued was speedily followed by greater activity and a wilder uproar than ever among both the hostile parties.

Return ye to the terrified Alicia. She heard the clamor, the shouting, and the dire confusion, wilder than the storm and the roar of the sea. It seemed as if the old castle were tumbling about her ears. She had sunk on her knees, and held her clasped hands toward Herrick in agonized supplication. He stood irresolute and agitated by conflicting emotions. He knew his duty called him to share the labor and peril of his father and kinsmen, rash and misguided as he deemed them. Yet how could he leave the fair girl thus imploring his help? Had not his father, too, committed her to his charge?

"You will save me, Herrick?" entreated the maiden.

"What can I do?" stammered the youth.

"Take me home! Oh, take me to my father! I was mad to leave home! I was headstrong. Oh, Herrick, take me back, and I will bless your name forever!"

Turning abruptly, the young man went to the door. He found it fastened on the outside. He beat violently upon it, and shouted the names of several retainers.

A voice answered him without:

"The castle is attacked by soldiers. Every man is wanted on the ramparts!"

"Undo the door! Which of you dared bolt me in! Call Hilda. Send Hilda hither!" he shouted.

"Oh, Herrick, take me away! I shall die if I stay here!" shrieked the poor girl, more and more alarmed every instant.

Herrick took her hand and led her to the extreme end of the hall. There stood a massive cask full of liquor; from which at meals the men were accustomed to draw full flagons.

With a giant's strength the young man hurled this cask, larger and heavier than a hoghead, on one side. It had stood directly over a trap-door. Herrick stooped and pulling an iron ring lifted this, disclosing a narrow flight of stone steps. A rush of cold damp air came from the opening.

"Behold the secret passage," he said. "It leads by a winding way to a door that opens outside the walls. You can go that way; take this torch to guide your steps. You will find the outer door unbarred; it is always kept so. When you are outside nothing will hinder your flight."

He put the torch into Alicia's hand; he led her to the steps down which she was to go. Alicia looked up at him. He was struggling violently with emotion; his right hand was clenched; his teeth were set as in terrible determination.

"And you—what will you do?" asked the girl.

"I Oh, I will shut the trap-door, and replace the cask to conceal your flight. Then I will batter down your door, and go out to help my kinsmen, and die in defense of the castle."

Alicia's feet were already on the grimy steps of the passage. She shivered violently.

"I cannot go alone!" she said. "Come you with me!"

"How can I leave the castle when foes are besieging it?"

"Your father put me in your care, and locked the door. He does not want you. He would send, if he did. I dare not go alone! Come, Herrick—my cousin—come!"

"What can harm you, alone? The storm is

over; the country is quiet. All the fighting-men are here."

"I should not know the way to my home, and it is far!" moaned the girl, sobbing in terror.

"At the nearest farm-house you will find shelter, rest, and a guide and horse when you list to pursue the journey. Here is money; all the boons are easily tribed."

He offered a purse, which the girl refused to take.

"If you will not go with me," she murmured, "I shall die in this underground passage! It frightens me but to look at it! I shall never come forth alive! And you will perish, too, Herrick! You must come with me!"

She stood on the topmost step and clasped his arm with her white hand, looking beseechingly in his face.

"Do you care for me, Alicia?" he asked, earnestly.

"Surely I do," she answered. "You are my only friend, Herrick!"

"What will you do for me, Alicia, if for your sake I desert my father in his hour of need?"

"Take me to my father, and he will send you help. He will serve you in all things."

"What will you do for me?"

"I will bless you. Oh, Herrick! I will call you my deliverer!"

"Will you love me, Alicia?"

"I do love you, cousin."

"But not as I love you! You have long known—your mother has known—how madly I worship you! I would give the world, my life—my honor even—to call you mine! Do not start; my father sent to capture you for the purpose of making you my wife, ay, this night! But I would have no constraint; you shall be free to choose. I might compel you to wed me, but I love you too well for that, Alicia!"

"Oh, Herrick! you have a noble soul!"

"Hear me now," cried the young man, impatiently. "I am ready to go with you, to forsake all; to brand myself as a traitor; to take you to your father's house! But you must promise to be my wife! Will you promise that, Alicia?"

"Herrick, you have too grand a soul to profit by my sore strait! Be generous—I implore you!"

"Then you love me not! You scorn my suit, proud girl!"

"I do not scorn—I honor you. I am lost unless you save me! I appeal to your mercy."

"Shall I save you for another suit?"

His eyes glared; his lips were drawn; his face was white as death.

"You must answer me before I stir, girl," he gasped, releasing his arm from her feeble hold. You want me to save you—that you may wed another?"

"Oh, no, no, no! Herrick!"

"Will you swear to marry me?"

"Oh, I cannot!"

"Will you swear to marry no one else?"

"Mercy, mercy, Herrick!"

"By my ancestors, you shall swear, or I leave you to perish! Hark to those wild shouts! Our men have triumphed! They will be in here presently! What will become of you?"

"Save me! Save me!"

"Will you swear to marry no man unless I give you leave?"

"I will! I will!"

"Swear then! by this sword! No, by your hopes of heaven!"

"I swear!" repeated the affrighted girl, falling on her knees.

"I have your oath!" cried Herrick, exultingly. "You shall wed me, or no man! Now come!"

He threw one arm around her waist. The cries without were redoubled; but unheeding them, he lifted her down the steps, closed the trap-door after them and bolted it on the lower side.

Carrying the torch in one hand, and clasping the almost-fainting maiden firmly with the other, he gained the passage, and sped on swiftly, till the door beyond was reached. There he stood open with some exertion of strength, and they stood in the open air, outside.

A terrible scene burst on Herrick's sight, amid the clamor and shouting. Flames were rushing from the upper windows of the castle.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 417.)

ONE CONSTANT FRIEND.

BY WOOD B. SCRIBBLER.

In fancied friends and dreaded foes,
I've disappointments found,
So true were these, so false were those,
That trust with doubts abound.

But true to himself,
Ever true to himself,
And he's a truth itself to me;
Do seek—much elate,
To better my state,
His selfish form I see.

Ambition's fire may brightly burn,
Or picture visions fast;
Or, lowly soaring, fancy seek
For friends and foes at last.

But the same little sprite,
With spirits so light,
Whisks off the pleasure refined;
At a whisper from his wing
For the friend I would win,
A cool acquaintance I find.

This meddler in all my affairs
I name ill-luck, and begin
Anew the race with faded despair,
Yet he is certain to win.

Disgraced at last,
With results of the past,
I turn from his withering wand
And seek words of due weight,
His misdeeds to relate,
Lo! here, he's guiding my hand.

Wife or Widow?

OR,

ETHELIND ERLE'S ENEMY.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "A GIRL'S HEART," "A DANGEROUS WOMAN," "THE WRONGED HEIRESS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MRS. FAUNCE.

"Her face was pale, but very beautiful; her lips had a more delicate outline, and the tint was deeper. But her countenance was like the majestic angels."

For a season that strange, erratic woman, the mistress of Lorn, tasted of happiness in feverish draughts that were like nectar to her palate at one moment, and bitter as gall the next. Colonel Falkner was at her feet again, the blind, infatuated lover. He had once more fallen completely under the spell of her grace and beauty. The sinful and miserable past, which had been so darkly hinted at in the first interviews they held together, was never referred to now. He preferred to believe blindly and implicitly in her truth, perhaps; for he made no effort to sweep aside the curtain that hid so much that was dark and mysterious.

But Mrs. Faunce could not forget. The sword of Damocles hung suspended above her head, and whether she waked or slept, whether she rejoiced or sorrowed, she never for one moment lost sight of the fact that it was there, as real as reality, though she saw it not. And the consciousness murdered her peace, embittered her happiest moments, as was most natural, under the circumstances.

One day, when she sat musing in her own room, her graceful hands lying in her lap, her eyes bent upon the carpet, she was suddenly roused from her reverie by the loud ringing of the door-bell.

"It is he—it is Philip," she murmured, a soft rose-flush stealing into her cheeks.

A few minutes later the room door opened and Joan Withers entered—alone. Mrs. Faunce could not repress a cry of disappointment.

"Where is he, Joan? Did he only send a message? Give it to me instantly."

The old woman looked white and scared.

"Hush, my lady," she said, in a muffled voice. "It was not Colonel Falkner, but—the other one!"

"What other?"

"Raymond Challoner."

An exclamation of anger and terror broke from the lips of Mrs. Faunce, and she started impulsively to her full height, and stood there with both hands firmly clinched.

"No God!" she gasped, her face just audible.

"Am I never to know rest or peace?"

"Of course I refused to admit him," said Joan. "But he bade me say to you that even a dozen rebuffs would not discourage him—that he should come again."

"Do you think an suspect—or is it mere idle curiosity that brings him here?"

"The latter, I fully believe," Joan answered, pitying her mistress's evident terror so much that she half unconsciously belied her real convictions.

"I wish I knew—I wish I knew," moaned Mrs. Faunce, falling back into her chair again, with a dreadful shiver.

The next day, at about the same hour, the bell again sent its imperative summons echoing through the house. But a longer interval elapsed before Joan appeared at the door of the apartment in which Mrs. Faunce sat, pallid with suspense and fear.

"It was he—Mr. Challoner! I know, I feel it!" exclaimed the wretched woman, without waiting for her servant to speak.

"Yes, my lady."

"He intends driving me to madness and desperation. But I will never see him—never!"

Joan hastily advanced.

"He scribbled a few lines on this card, madam, and told me to deliver it immediately. Of course I could not refuse to take it."

The message was written in pencil, and ran thus:

"I have been dismissed from your door for the last time. When I come again to-morrow at this hour, you must admit me. I know you! I am not a man to be trifled with."

An hour later, when Colonel Falkner himself made his appearance at Lorn, he found Mrs. Faunce nervous and hysterical. She screamed at sight of him, and throwing herself helpless on his breast, clung to him in what seemed an agony of terror.

"What has happened?" he asked, in alarm.

"Are you ill?"

"Take me away," she shivered. "You have said that you love me. Prove it by helping me to fly from this hated spot."

"Be patient, Olympia," he said, trying to soothe her. "One of these days, as soon as everything is arranged, we will go."

"It must be now or never."

"It would necessitate a great pecuniary sacrifice were we to leave at once."

"What do I care for that?" she broke out, fiercely, with her hands clinched. "You shall not make me. And it would be wicked and sinful for you to weigh dollars and cents in the balance with my peace of mind."

He looked down at her with a strange glance in which there seemed to be a blending of love and shrinker disgust.

"It is not the loss in money matters that troubles me, and I might as well confess the truth," he said, a little coldly. "You know that my ward Ethelind is missing. I cannot bear to go away until I have heard some tidings of her."

Mrs. Faunce slipped quickly out of his arms and sat down. Her hands were now helplessly relaxed and trembled in her lap.

"You love that girl," she said, in a deep, shaken voice. "She has usurped my place in your heart. I have feared it sometimes—I know it now."

"Hush! you are talking wildly," he said, but his eyes fell beneath the searching gaze she sent quivering into them.

"If you do not love her, why are you so ready to sacrifice my happiness the moment she comes?"

"You misunderstand me, Olympia."

"Nay, I fear that I understand you only too well!"

"Ethelind was entrusted to my care by her dying father. She has gone away friendless and alone. She may be penniless for aught I know—she certainly is suffering. Is it not natural that I should wish to be assured of her well-being before leaving this part of the country?"

His tone was still cold and reproachful. Mrs. Faunce felt her powerlessness to hold out against him. She suddenly leaned her head against his shoulder and burst into a wild storm of sobs.

"Forgive me, Philip. I did not wish to betray anything akin to jealousy. But I am miserable—so wretched to live. I feel myself sinking into a horrible abyss where I shall be beyond the reach of hope or mercy or pardon; and nobody, not even you, is willing to stretch forth a saving hand."

"What do you mean, Olympia?" he said, bending toward her with a touch of returning tenderness. "Why do you talk so strangely? Are you threatened by any new or immediate danger?"

"She dared not tell him."

"No one here has penetrated your secret," he went on, in his usual tone. "You might remain at Lorn half a lifetime and not a whisper arise to betray the story of the past. Remember how secluded is this place—how few in all the country have ever heard of you."

"The danger may be more imminent than you are aware of," she shivered. "It is impossible to tell. And the world would not judge me with your leniency. It has no faith in me. It would sooner adjudge me guilty than innocent."

"No one would dare breathe a word against you in my presence."

"Oh, Philip, Philip! Promise me that you will never forsake me."

"I do promise—but it is unnecessary. Our lives are too closely woven together ever to be divided again."

She was silent a moment or two, as if struggling with the emotions that had so nearly overcome her. At length she said, in a thrilling whisper:

"I am like one beset. A nameless horror is hovering over me. I feel as if evil spirits had hold of my soul, and were trying to wrench it from my body. Philip, unless you save me I am lost—lost to all eternity. Oh, be merciful! Let us fly this very night!"

"So soon?" he said, startled by her wildness and vehemence. Impossible. Try to be calm, Olympia. There is nothing to fear."

But she went on urging more vehemently than ever that such a course was her only salvation. They would seek some far-off sunny clime, she said, some lovely, romantic tale in a southern sea, where they could live and die together re- freed from the dreary and irksome trammels of a false civilization.

Colonel Falkner listened in a vague wonder to her beseeching words. But instead of drawing his heart closer to her they seemed to widen the distance between them. The glowing pictures she painted possessed little charm for him in the mood that had suddenly come over him. He experienced a sickening sensation of misery and disappointment, as if all the brightest hopes of his life had crumbled to ashes in his grasp, like Dead Sea fruit. Were the scales falling from his eyes? Or was this reaction only the natural effect of his better nature trying to reassert itself?

Mrs. Faunce, with a woman's subtle intuitions, divined at once the change in his mood. She became silent all at once, a spasm of agony went over her face, and she sunk back in her chair trembling and pallid, as if she had resigned herself to a fate she was powerless to avert.

"You are not yourself to-day," said Colonel Falkner, looking at her curiously. "Something has happened to distress you, and you are keeping it from me."

"No, not myself," she said, wearily, utterly ignoring the words with which he had con-

cluded. "I believe I realize how a poor, doomed prisoner must feel the hour before the executioner comes."

She smiled very faintly, adding, before he could recover himself to reply:

"Perhaps we had better say adieu for the present. You can come again to-morrow—if you wish."

"I shall come very early, then; as early as you will admit me!" he exclaimed, struck by the misery expressed in every tone of her sobbing voice.

"No," she said firmly, "your visit to-morrow must be paid at a later hour than ever before. Do not come until the sun is down. I shall be busy until then."

She offered no further explanation of the request, but rose quickly and held out her hand. Colonel Falkner took it, held it rather longer than usual, and as if yielding to an irresistible impulse, bent down suddenly and touched his lips to the soft, cool palm.

"I hope to find you more cheerful when I come again," he said.

She bowed her head passively, making no other reply. But when he had gone out and shut the door, she sunk down on her knees, clasped both hands over her eyes, and burst out in subdued but hysterical crying.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DECREE OF FATE.

"The trait I'm fallen into my patience cannot bear! It frights my reason, warps my sense of virtue, Religion—changes me into a thing I look at with abhorring!"

—THE HUNCHBACK.

The next day, at the hour he had himself appointed, Raymond Challoner slowly approached Lorn, threading one of those grass-grown paths that led, with many a detour, through the neglected grounds.

He was very pale, but his face wore a grim, resolute expression, and it was with a firm step that he ascended the terrace and made his way to the gloomy, forbidding-looking portal. He looked like a man with a fixed, inflexible purpose in his mind.

His foot had scarcely touched the topmost step when the door opened, noiselessly, and Joan appeared, her usually imperturbable face strangely agitated. She spoke no word of greeting, but in utter silence beckoned him to enter.

"And so I am to be given the open sesame to this enchanted palace at last?" he said, with a mocking curl of the lip, as he crossed the threshold. "It is well."

"You would never enter with my consent," said Joan, fiercely. "But of course my mistress has no pleasure. I am powerless to keep you out."

Again Raymond smiled derisively.

"One would imagine you had played the part of ogre quite long enough. Beauty and the Beast and Una and the Lion are worn out tales. They grow tiresome in process of time. No matter—I have gained my point. Pray conduct me at once to the presence of Mrs. Faunce."

The sneering emphasis with which he spoke that name sent a shudder through the woman's frame.

She suddenly grasped his arm.

"I can see that you are in no conciliatory mood," she said, dropping her voice to a whisper. "Be warned in time. My mistress is desperate already—do not drive her to madness. I make this plea for your sake as well as hers."

"Against what do you warn me?"

"Alas, I know not," replied Joan, in deep agitation, dropping her hand and shrinking from him. "My heart misgives me—that's all. The shameful past has been rising before my mind with strange vividness all the morning."

to papa. Maroon took alarm when I suggested it. He did not approve of strangers; she might be wrong; she had never even told him of these street interviews, but at last she was persuaded reluctantly to give me his number, after extorting a promise that I would reveal myself to him, and I had the felicity of riding down town next day with the man whom I had already consecrated in my thoughts as my future father-in-law.

"If that conductor could but have known the conflicting emotions aroused in my mind by his frayed linen and shabby blouse! If he could have known the heroic resolution it required not to slip a V into his hand and refuse the change! I wished I had done it afterward. It might have brought about an explanation which would have enlightened me."

"After six weeks or so of this blissful experience, a chill of reserve stole over Maroon. Never mind the misery I endured. It came out at last that there was another sinner in the field, a man whom her father favored, who had already been a generous friend to them, who would cancel that fatal indebtedness at the price of her hand. All men are fools once in their lives, and I was too much infatuated to have a doubt of this fishy story. Imagine, if you can, the arguments I employed in having the promise of that pleasure and recompense transferred to me. I was a thousand times willing about loose as it happened, and found no difficulty in presenting myself at the Moynarty apartments on the next Sunday morning with seven hundred in my pocket. It was on the programme that Maroon should present the money to her father, smoothing down the stubborn pride which might stand in the way of its acceptance, while I should take advantage of the first flush of his gratitude to plead my cause."

"The dear child was all in a flutter. She took the roll of bills I put in her hand and faced about as the door opened and a man scarcely older than I was entered."

"Here it is, Gustave. I hope you are satisfied. Now tell Mr. Garth why I cannot accept of the honor he would confer upon me."

"Because she is my wife and has been these two years," said he, putting his arm about her, while she had the grace to hide that 'fair, false face' of hers upon his shoulder. Maybe you'll believe me, Mont, when I tell you I never once thought of the seven hundred dollars I had thrown away. It was the hardest experience of my life to know that the witchery that girl had thrown around me was all a deceit and a snare."

"Maroon, I appealed to her: 'what reason or excuse have you for this? Must I go without any regard at all for the woman I believed you to be?'"

"She lifted her face with the very tearful, pleading look I had seen upon it a score of times."

"He made me do it. Pity me, think what my life must be, what my temptation was. She wrung her two little white hands together with a hopeless gesture, and upon my word, Mont, I can't think hardly of her to this day, though I made friends with the shabby conductor immediately after, and for years of course, that he had never heard of my siren. It won't seem like sacrilege will it, after that, to ask how your love affair came about?"

"My Maroon was companion to Mrs. West— you remember her—almost like an adopted daughter in her old age. She was the daughter of Garth, and had the flavor of *le diable* which clings to your siren taken away by as near an approach to the angelic as this earth affords us."

More than an ordinary friendship had existed between these two young men; therefore it was with more than ordinary curiosity and interest that Garth looked forward to meeting his friend's wife. The keen expectancy in his eyes changed to accusation and horror as the slight, little form arose before him, while the fair face blanched, and the smile and words of welcome from the past seemed to fade away.

"This your wife? Then Heaven pity you, my friend. This woman is Maroon Moynarty!"

Amaze struggling with indignation gave way in Tresdale's mind to a conviction of the truth. There are men whom pale or wrong reader fierce and dangerous. Tresdale was one of these.

"No lie," as he caught her wrist. "Were you that degraded thing?"

"I was."

The bare, unqualified admission, nothing more. Looking from one stern face to the other with hunted and desperate eyes, she felt how useless it would be to plead any extenuation of that past, and turned away with a mute gesture of despair.

One year of restless wandering, months passed amid the wildest scenes of the wide, wide West, where the colossal features of sublime Nature overtop and overwhelm the pigmy man, the scene of erratic travel extending all the way from the grand, gloomy pine forests of the North to the rolling Texas slopes— a year from the time Tresdale and Garth had departed in company, the former returned alone.

Garth was settled in a rising Western town, devoting himself to his profession, with the certainty of growing into greatness, but his bosom friend had come home to die.

There was no doubt of that in the mind of any one who looked into his ghastly, thin visage or noted how the strong nerves of the man had deserted him. Few had the opportunity of doing so. He shut himself up in his own house, shunned society, and wasted perceptibly day by day.

When his old housekeeper came to announce that she was about to leave him for a home with her son, adding that she had found a person to fill her place provided he approved her choice, he only turned from her irritably:

"See for yourself that she is tidy and quiet, and tell her to let me alone."

Not a word of regret at parting from the faithful woman who had been like a mother to him, yet Tresdale had been twice married. One after another the most eminent physicians of the day waited upon him. He never sent for them; he answered their questions listlessly, threw their prescriptions into the fire, and summoned the new director of his household affairs.

"Mrs. Gray, don't let another doctor inside the door. Who is it sends them to worry me to death faster than I am going, I wonder? A glass of water before you get if you please."

She brought it silently and watched him drop a portion from a vial of colorless liquid which he always carried in his breast-pocket. Suddenly a shapely hand, brown and small, drew the glass out of his reach.

"I am afraid you take that more than is good for you. Let me try to quiet you by reading instead."

He had never noticed his housekeeper particularly before. Now, too weak to resist, he lay back and gazed at her. An elderly woman with smooth white hair lying under a square of lace, with a dark face, and eyes that drooped habitually under sweeping black lashes. Seemed like Marion there, and yet it seemed Marion's very voice which, meant to lull him into repose, started him instead to intense excitement.

Next moment things surged before his sight, his face changed to a purpled hue, the veins in his neck stood out dark and turgid. It was not his first attack of what one of his physicians had called apoplexy of the nerves.

Despite his command, another doctor found his way to his bedside—a bluff, hearty old man—who had held a long consultation with Mrs. Gray before he was admitted to the patient.

"Well, my lad, what is the matter with you? Heart-disease? Nonsense; you've no more heart-disease than I have. I'll tell you what it is, fast enough. Did you ever hear of Chloisam?"

"No, never," but Tresdale awoke to an interest he had not manifested heretofore.

"Now, listen. Is not this your daily routine? You are nervous and depressed, and what do you do—take chloral. You have a burning in your head, brain confused, galloping pulse, and you take chloral. Or you are chilled, pulse down to a mere thread, heart scarcely in motion, and you take chloral. I'm not gifted with

second-sight, but that excellent creature, your housekeeper, has divined the cause of this mysterious illness of yours, and in every symptom I recognize the result of chloral. You are adding by every dose to the fire which is already consuming you. Let the stuff alone, and you will be a well man in six months' time."

Tresdale protested. "It is my friend, doctor. It has given me the only rest I have known for a year."

"Tell me about it."

"I had met with a loss. I was miserable and sleepless, but chloral warded me into dreamless oblivion; it even dulled my anguish of mind."

"By sapping your natural affections, leaving you incapable of any emotions save selfishness, irritability and despair. Chloral is your tyrant, and you are its slave—you will very soon be its victim, mark my words, unless you fling your bottle after the prescriptions which you sent to the fittest place they could go, considering your case."

Do any of you know what a herculean task breaking such a habit implies!

Months afterward Tresdale looked back upon that darkened page of his life's history, and shuddering, wondered at the straits to which he had been reduced. Like clouded dreams came the recollection of delirious agony and suffering beyond the power of words to tell before nature triumphed over the injurious effects of the insidious drug he had so ignorantly taken; but, through them all, the knowledge of tender care, of cool hands and pitiful eyes, of a will which strengthened his when he might have given up the battle—which willed him back to life.

Then, one day, when all danger was past, Mrs. Gray appeared before him strangely transformed. The dark complexion was washed away, the gray front and lace head-gear had been removed, and behold! it was Marion's matchless face and golden braids that were bowed before him.

Kneeling, she spoke:

"Hear me, then, judge me if you will. What your friend told you was true, but it was not all the truth. Gustave was my brother. His false claim was made to relieve me from the importunities of a lover whose generosity had been shamefully abused. What a wretch I must seem to you, and yet I loathed the lie I was forced to lead. My father and brother had brought me up to play my part in the plots they formed, and so well tutored was I in the habit of obedience—woe to me had I disobeyed—that the question of right or wrong was scarcely considered."

Garth's love tempted me as a means of escape from them, but I put the temptation from me. I did not love him and I would not do him such a wrong, and I was thankful afterward when other release came. My father died in a cell, and my brother was sentenced to the State's Prison. For the first time I was free to follow my better aspirations, and then, Mont, I began my life anew. I took another name, found honest employment, warm friends, and later—*you*. Oh, forgive me that I dared to believe I was done with the past and linked my life with yours."

Was he weak and unmanly that he forgave her? Remember, he had the picture in his mind of grim death himself and snatched away his victim. Was he infatuated when he took her back with a firm faith in her true repentance of those sins for which she was the least responsible? Then it was an infatuation so fraught with good works, so crowned by noble results, so accompanied by heart-peace, that we may well envy it and him.

THOUGHTS.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

Ever backward to the past,
Thoughts are flying thick and fast,
Thoughts that fill the eyes with tears,
And the thoughts of pleasant years!
Ever to the future valled
Golden ships of thought have sailed;
Ever to the future valled
Loving fingers at the helms.
Dear to us the thoughts that fly
Ever upward to the sky
Noble thoughts that never die!

Silver Star,
THE BOY KNIGHT;
OR,
The Mystery of Osman, the Outlaw.

A PRAIRIE ROMANCE.

BY OLL COMBES.

CHAPTER XXIII.

KIT TAKES THE COMPASS.

OUR friends took dinner in the grove, then mounting they set off upon the trail of the surveying party.

Old Kit, having the advantage of a horse, felt rejoiced at leaving his wife behind; but, hardly had he spoken his mock farewell, ere Sabina led a sorry-looking old mule from a thicket hard by, and mounting it came on and joined the party, a smile of triumph beaming upon her face.

"Please gracious, Kit Columbus Bandy, you've dodged me for the last time," the old woman exclaimed, pounding her mule with her umbrella.

"Oh, horn of Joshua!" groaned Kit, looking at the sadness he could not express.

A compromise was effected between the husband and wife, for the time being, and all rode along harmoniously.

The trail of the surveyors was plain, the wheels of their wagons making a deep impression in the soil. They forded the White Earth and passing from among the wooded hills and bluffs entered the open prairie. Here the trail was more difficult to follow. The autumnal fires had not visited this part of the country, and a coat of thick dry grass covered the plain.

The keen eye of Silver Star, accustomed to the trail, was called into play, and so the party moved on, and about the middle of the afternoon the surveyors were discovered, heading northward, about a mile away.

Silver Star and Old Kit deployed themselves to the right to observe the movements of the party. They rode around—keeping in the low grounds—until they had gained a point where they could command a fair view of the whole corps of surveyors. The wagon was being drawn by four good mules, and followed by an escort of some ten mounted men. In advance was a man carrying a long pole with a red flag, and several shorter ones with white flags. Far behind were two men, and between these and the wagon were two more—all mounted but the last two.

"Oh-ho!" exclaimed Kit, after he had taken a look at the party through Silver Star's glass. "do you see the movements, my boy? Do you see Uncle Sam's devoted servants?"

"Yes. I can see them with the naked eye, but they are surveyors, Kit. We are on the wrong trail."

"Well, what makes you think so, Silver Star?"

"That's easy enough determined. That man in front is the flag-man; those two behind the wagon are the chain-bearers; you can see them at work—and those two away behind are the engineer or surveyor and his assistant. With the glass you can see his compass and staff easy enough."

"That's all so, boy, and you can see their guns and pistols, too. I tell you that's a clever trick to fool the unsophisticated; but it won't pan with me worth a cent. I've seen men go down the pulpit in ministerial robes, and yet be the hired servant of the devil. Now, Silver, I, Kit Bandy, know that there are no surveyors in this country, else they'd be escorted by the military. Old Arky and me made them fellers' camp a visit 'o' other day, and we see'd all wasn't right then. No, that surveyin' business is all a

blind, and I'll bet ten to one that the gals are in that wagon."

"Then you must have positive proof of the fact," said the Boy Knight.

"I have, Silver; the girls are in that wagon!"

"Then, by gracious, Kit, I—"

"Now hold on, Silver Star—set down and keep cool—don't let a brace of pretty gals make a plumb fool of you. I don't blame you for lovin' them, but I could shake Sabina and smooth out these wrinkles and crow's-tracks on my ole face, I'd try to cut you out, boy."

"Well, if they have the girls then they are bad men, and I've a notion to begin wingin' them as I did the Indians yesterday. What do you say?"

"No, no, boy; you can't ever come that game with them freebooters, for that's what they are. You can see they are all well mounted, and the Ingins weren't. Besides, robbers always have fast horses, and there may be some in that gang that would discomfit your gray. And there may be good marksmen there, too, with long-ranged rifles. Then again you haven't got black whirlwinds to ride in—no ridges, scarcely, to dodge behind. No, it will never do, boy; we've got to circumvent them dogs some way or other before they cross the Cheyenne and get into the hills."

"They're just about going to strike the Buffalo Pass crossin'," said Silver Star; "we might get in ahead of them and ambush them."

"We must keep them out of the Buffalo Pass, boy—to the right, and that'll give us a better chance. Oh, horns of Joshua! if I had about fifty of my braves here now I'd rake them ole outlaws from taw."

"Your braves! what do you mean by that, Kit?"

"Haw! haw! haw!" laughed Kit; "why, boy, I am White Crane, the mysterious chief!"

"You're jokin', Kit!" exclaimed the boy.

"I am, am I! Didn't I save your bacon the night I met you at the Dead Fall? Didn't I shoot two of my braves next mornin' to get you out of your dead that?"

"Great miracles! a light bursts upon my mind. I see through that mystery. Why, man, how dare you serve two masters? You're a puzzle, Kit. You're a cheat—a fraud!"

"Well, I'll tell you all about it some day. It tickled Arkansas almost to death when I told him, but the best thing to be did is to rescind them gals. Now, I suggest that we creep down to the trail and capture that surveyor and his man, and then you and me run the helm awhile—long enough to get them out of range of the Buffalo Pass."

"Good, Kit! good, White Crane! anything to be at work!"

The two descended the bluff they were on and rode back to their friends; and then they all galloped around almost to the head of the trail, all the while keeping in the low valleys.

Leaving their horses and friends concealed behind a hill, Kit and Silver Star crept along through the tall grass of a long narrow slough until they came to where the wagon had crossed. Knowing the position of the surveyors, and his man, they crept, they concealed themselves in the grass to await their approach.

In a few minutes Herman Braash and a servant appeared over the hill and rode down toward them. They carried a compass and field glass, and as they descended the hill they blacked their animals' pace to a slow walk. They were talking, all unconscious of the eyes that were upon them—the ears that heard Braash say:

"If we get to the river without molestation, we'll be all safe enough. Those horsemen we seen may be pursuers; but I hardly think they are Bandy and his tribe, for they, of course, will follow the Indians, and not find out their mistake till we get into the hills, and then—"

"Oh! but you're not there!" exclaimed a voice as the Silver Star sprang out of the grass, seized the horses and held a cocked revolver at each breast; "s death, men, to move!"

Herman Braash was thunderstruck, and his face grew white as a sheet. But he soon recovered his presence of mind, and with a forced laugh, said:

"Why, Bandy, my old friend, what does this mean?"

"Business!" replied Bandy. "and you can't bluff me a bit with laughin', Herman. I'm ole pious, and that boy's still worse. All we want is for you to dismount and give up."

Braash's companion was a Mexican half-breed with the look of a desperado. His horse had been seized by Silver Star, who, boy that he was, looked so insignificant to the ruffian, standing in the grass, that he, as soon as the order to dismount was given, he—the robber—made a grab for his revolver and succeeded in drawing it, but before he could fire, Silver Star sent a bullet through his brain. Not a groan even escaped his lips, and as he tumbled a lifeless heap to the earth, Braash grew pale and the glare of a demon shot from his eyes; but he dismounted and gave himself up, saying:

"Bandy, what does this murderous assault mean? You'll have to answer to the United States government for this!"

"I let 'em!" replied Kit, taking a pair of handcuffs from his pockets. "and I've been wantin' the chance these two years. These wristlets, Herman, I've carried for you till they act'y were a hole in my pocket; so now take them on like a little man—there, snap, she goes!"

Completely vanquished, Braash made no resistance, and the manacles were placed upon his wrists.

"Now, sir," remarked Kit, "you've some gals in your wagon that we want next."

"I don't!" sneered the villain; "then get them. Waylay the wagon, won't you, you accursed old baboon?"

"Can't you give me a written order for them?"

"When I do you'll know it. You have taken the advantage of me once, but you cannot do it again."

Alarmed by the pistol-shot—the wind being toward them—Old Arkansas and his friends hastened to the scene of action. Meantime, Silver Star, who had taken the top of the hill to see if the shot had alarmed the outlaws; but as the wind was unfavorable, it appeared the sound did not reach them.

Kit was not long in preparing for the next move. He had Silver Star on the Mexican half-breed, and he while he effected a change of suits with the surveyor. This done, the two mounted the outlaws' horses, and, taking the compass and other surveying tools, rode boldly forward upon the trail of the wagon, leaving Braash in charge of Old Arkansas and Sparrowhawk.

When Kit and his companion reached the top of the hill, the wagon and escort were half a mile ahead, as were the chain-bearers also; while, beyond all, the flagman was standing with his pole set. About two hundred yards in advance of our friends stood a short pole, to which was attached a red strip of cloth. Silver Star was the first to discover it, and at once inquired what it meant.

"I see you know nothin' much 'bout surveyin', boy," replied Kit. "I want to do a little of it—was axman for a party once, and know all 'bout it. That flag yander is a 'marker,' as I call them. It marks the spot where the flagman's pole last set, when the surveyor sighted his line through. He marked the spot with that flag, and went on, so's to be at the next point by the time we reached here. Now, I'll set there and make another sight through, then move on. Oh, you'll learn, boy; but ar'n't the warmints takin' a sight of pains, though, to make folks believe they're angels? You see, anything bearin' a government stamp has a free pass through this country—particularly across Indian reservations, and that's one thing that these scoundrels have come this surveyin' dodge on us for. But, how do I look, Silver, with this rig on? cavalierish! I superabundant!"

"Oh, you look skintuous—like General Custer."

"You, boy, with that coat and hat—both too big—look like the orneryest greaser that ever staggered a man in the back; but here we are."

Reaching the "marker," Kit dismounted, placed the staff by the flag and then adjusted the compass and liberated the needle. The flagman was in plain view, though nearly a mile away.

Kit took the field-glass and scanned the whole party before him carefully. The glass brought them so close that he almost shuddered. He could see the very eyes of the flagman, a villainous-looking fellow, apparently looking right into his own face.

"I tell you, boy, they're armed like pirates and all good men—on good horses; but, that makes no difference. We must put them off the Buffalo Pass route, and throw them east. I see Herman, the bugger, was only runnin' on about one or two degrees bearin', but I'll pop her around to about ten degrees this time, and a little more next, and that'll about take us to the Open Wood Ford. Dast the needle, it dips and bobs round too much to suit me—too much attractions. It reminds me of old Sabina when there's other ladies around me; but thar, that's good enough."

The needle having settled, Old Kit glanced through the sights, then took off his hat in his right hand and held it out from him. The flagman understood the signal, and at once moved his pole several rods to the right, and was kept moving until Kit was afraid to go further for fear too much of a deviation at one time might arouse suspicion. It is true, the sun could not be seen, and so no one could tell exactly, the points of the compass, except those with the compass; still Kit was afraid the outlaws might know the country better than he did.

When the flagman was given the signal to "stick"—by the surveyor raising both hands and then dropping them—he marked the spot with a little flag and went on; while Kit, mounting his horse, rode on, laughing till his sides ached.

"Yesterday was your day, Silver Star," he said, "and to-day's mine. You were a wind-spirit, and now a civil engineer. Ho! ho! ho—orn of Joshua! won't thar be a blin' at camp when them fools ahead find out that we're running this helm-business. Sounds! if they'd a glass they might see that your clothes hangs looish on you, and that your legs are poked through this coat further than Herman's were. Oh, but this is a scientific party—ha! ha! ha! But I wonder whar Professor Daymon is with his maps and lofty intellect!"

The two rode on until they came to the next "marker," when Kit again set the compass and sighted the compass. As before, he gave their course a few degrees east bearing; and in this way they went on for some ten miles without detection. The last "set" made by the flagman brought him to the edge of the timber bordering the Big Cheyenne river.

It was now almost dark, and as old Kit knew the party would encamp at the river when they found they were out of their course, the old man was at a loss as to what he should do. They dare not go on, of course, and the absence of Herman and the Mexican might soon reveal the state of affairs. But after all, he had accomplished all he aimed at—had thrown the outlaws more than five miles out of their course.

"Well, Silver," the old man said, "we might as well ride back and meet the rest of the folks and hold a council of war—the war itself, if Sabina's there yet. All the skulduggery part is through with now, and next comes the blood and danger part."

They turned about and rode back along the trail, and had gone but a short distance when they discovered Old Arkansas and Sparrowhawk riding toward them at the top of their animals' speed.

"What in the furries are you up now?" exclaimed Kit.

"They surely haven't left that outlaw with that wife of yours," remarked Silver Star.

In a moment the riders drew up before them.

"Good God, Bandy!" exclaimed Arkansas, "that man Braash got away from us!"

Horn of Joshua! how come that? Were you asleep, Arky?"

"No; that infernal old woman of yours did it through confounded spite. You see, we mounted the prisoner on Silver Star's horse, and then hitched the horse to Sabina's mule, and when the backs were turned, she let the hitch-rail, and before we could say Jack Robin's side, the rascal put them big spurs into Prince's side and shot away like an arrow."

"Well, great Jehovah! that'll spile all our rangers' sense. Why didn't you strangle that woman?"

"Last we see'd of her she was follerin' Herman Braash."

"Well, let 'er rip; we'll go through that robber camp afore mornin' just the same or my name's not Ka-ris-topher Ka-lumbus Bandy."

"Second motion," added Old Arkansas, eager for the fray.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PIKE THOMAS, DETECTIVE.

ALL unconscious of what was going on behind them, the outlaws moved on until the river was reached. Herman Braash, the captain of the band and his servant Lavejoe, had remained behind as a rear-guard under the shallow pretense of conducting the survey. It is true they were moving across the open prairie, and the compass enabled them to keep a direct course so that it was useful as well as a disguise. The flagman was the real scout and guide of the party, though he yielded to the directions of the man at the helm for the reason that he had never attempted to cross the open prairie to the Buffalo Pass. And thus double guarded they moved rapidly forward, but to their surprise came out at Open Wood Crossing.

When the river was reached, all hands went to work preparing for the night, and while thus engaged, the man on guard announced the approach of a horseman from the east.

"Well," one of the party exclaimed, "who can it be? and why in the nation don't the captain and Lavejoe come in?"

No one answered for no one knew; but a moment later the man on the white horse dashed into camp, and the question was answered. Captain Braash had arrived.

A cry of astonishment burst from every lip, while one frightful oath after another issued from the captain's lips as his horse kept plunging and rearing.

"Catch this horse, idiots!" he finally screamed.

A man caught the frightened, panting animal.

"Captain, what does this mean?" asked the man.

"It means that we are a set of stupid asses!" Kit Bandy and that young hell-bonded, Silver Star, waylaid me and Lavejoe, and after killing Lavejoe, forced me to surrender. I was then handcuffed by that infernal Bandy and placed on that horse; but, thanks to the jealousy of old Bandy's wife, who came up with Arkansas and another chap whom I recognized as Paul Osman, I managed to escape. She cut the hitch rail when the others' faces were turned and told me to go, and I went. You fools have been guided here by old Kit Bandy and that boy, who took our coats, hats and instruments and followed in our places. I should think you could have seen you were not going to the Buffalo Pass."

"By the immaculate! who'd 'a' dreamed of such an infernal trick!" exclaimed the flagman; "everything went along as usual—I detected nothing."

"Ah! then fellows are cunning devils. All our attempts to throw them off the track of the girls have been mere boys' play. We'll have to fight our way through now, and we'll do thunder! well if we get the train through at all. But they'll never get them girls alive, now mind! Here, some of you fellows, get these handcuffs off my wrists. Curse that Bandy! This tells me that he's a sneak-in Old Government hiring."

After the irons were removed from the captain's wrists, he personally superintended the arrangement of the camp; and while thus engaged the approach of another horseman

through the gathering twilight was announced.

A few minutes later, Sabina Bandy came "pegging" into camp upon her old mule.

The outlaws jeered and hooted as she came up, but the captain quickly put an end to this by informing them that she was the woman that had liberated him.

"Why have you come here, Mrs. Bandy?" the outlaw asked, advancing to where she had drawn rein and dismounted.

"Because I wanted to tell you that old Kit Bandy, my lawfully-wedded husband, is in love with one of them gals in your wagon. That's exactly why I come."

"How do you know there's girls in that wagon?"

"Why, I heard old Kit say so; and as he's got his ole big nose into everything, I reckoned he knowed; and as I was sayin', he's in love with one of them girls and will raise the old fury till he gets her into his clutches; but please gracious, I, his broken-hearted wife, have determined he'll never take another woman to share his bed and board as long as my head's cold, and my tongue can wag. I follered you a-purpose to tell you to be on your guard or he'll go through your camp this blessed night. Double and terrible your guards round them gals. He beat me once; now I'm goin' to spend the rest of my life tryin' to beat him."

"I am under great and lasting obligations to you, Mrs. Bandy," said the outlaw captain, for giving me this timely warning. I fully sympathize with you in your worse than widowhood, and will endeavor to give you a decree of divorce the first opportunity by putting a bullet through that old Bandy's brain. Now, Mrs. Bandy, I extend to you the hospitality of my camp, such as it is, for the night. It is going to rain, I fear, and will be a bad, dismal night for a woman to be out."

"I'm a poor, lone woman and have got awful rude and sunburnt riding around after Old Kit Bandy; but the man that does question my good name is a dead man, so I reckon I don't care if I do stop with you as long as thar's other weemin' folks in your company."

"You may share the wagon with our lady friends if you wish," was the generous freebooter's offer.

"I don't know as young, flippety-flappety girls care 'bout sociatin' with an old woman, but I'm as good as they dare be, Mr. Brasher, and if they don't like me they can git out with their rick-rick manners and pride. If you fellows'll jist look after Jerusalem, my mule, I'll be obliged to you."

Considering what she had done for him, and her warning as to Bandy's designs, the outlaw captain could not find it in his heart to mistrust the crazy old woman of any designs upon his confidence; and so he conducted her to the wagon, and raising the cover hanging over the forward end, he said:

"Girls, if you wish a few minutes' exercise, you have the privilege of getting out and walking around. Mrs. Bandy, here, will keep you company."

"Yes, gals; come, hop out and take a little promenade with old Aunt Sabina Bandy," added the old woman.

"Oh, Mrs. Bandy!" exclaimed the captive maidens, starting up as if with joy at sound of the old woman's voice.

"Ah! I see you recognize Mrs. Bandy—have met before," said the outlaw chief, in surprise.

"Oh, yes," said Sabina, "I've seed 'em both afore; and ar'n't they pretty darlins', Mr. Brack! No wonder Old Kit Bandy's mighty distracted 'bout them."

The faces of the maidens wore a look of hopeless despondency. Their eyes were red with weeping, and their bodies weak and sore with long confinement. Gladly they accepted the invitation to a walk, and getting out of the wagon, each accepted an arm of Mrs. Bandy and moved slowly away toward the river, an armed guard keeping a strict watch upon them.

In the course of an hour the three were taken back to the wagon and placed therein. Mrs. Bandy's tongue ran incessantly, Old Kit being the chief object of discussion.

As the robber chief had predicted, the deep blue haze of Indian summer thickened into lowering clouds, and about dark a slow, drizzling rain set in. This made the outlaws all the more uneasy, for it would be an advantage to the hitch-rail, and before we could say Jack Robin's side, the rascal put them big spurs into Prince's side and shot away like an arrow."

"Well, great Jehovah! that'll spile all our rangers' sense. Why didn't you strangle that woman?"

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(To be continued—commenced in No. 410.)



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A Sterling Series.

We commence in this number of the SATURDAY JOURNAL a series of biographic and personal sketches of typical women of the present and past. To give it a varied and unique value we shall alternate the fine work of the late Mrs. E. F. Bilet with that of Dr. Legrand—an old favorite of our readers in the historic field; and thus in the course of the season the SATURDAY JOURNAL audience will have added greatly to its store of mind treasures.

Good writers ought to make good legislators, for they are pretty sure to know what they want and the best mode of presenting their case. We see by the Iowa press that our contributor, Oll Coomes, now in the legislature of that State in his first term is not an idle or useless member. He goes to work like an old hand. The knotty yet exceedingly important question of the right of the State to regulate the rates and service of railways within its limits, and the rights of the railway corporations to regulate their own affairs Mr. Coomes meets in a statesmanlike way by proposing a regular commission which shall have control of the whole matter at issue between the people and the railways—similar to the Massachusetts law, and which has worked so well. This is a sensible solution of a difficult problem and is just what might be expected from a writer for the SATURDAY JOURNAL!

A WORD FOR THE FLOWERS.—If we do not all become Amateur Flower Culturists, it will not be from lack of sources of information. The various seedsmen's catalogues are so admirable in description, and so full of correct directions for culture that their study is exceedingly pleasant, even for those who have no garden, while for those who have their plot of ground the neat and pretty books (for such they are, in many cases) supplied either free or at trifling cost, are all that can be desired. It is a good work these men are doing—disseminating a wide-spread taste for and knowledge of flowers; and though they thus advertise their "goods" they are none the less public benefactors, whose contribution to the fund of general intelligence and specific information must be acknowledged by every observant person. We take pleasure in advertising occasionally to them to encourage our readers in the pursuit of what certainly is a most pleasant, healthful, and, not unfrequently, a very profitable pursuit—the culture of flowers. The Catalogues with which we are familiar are those of James Vicks, and Briggs & Bros., of Rochester, and Bliss & Co., Thornburn, Peter Henderson, and Wm. H. Carson of New York City.

"If the story is not suitable for your paper will you kindly name its chief faults?"

As we have again and again announced that we cannot add to our onerous editorial work the gratuitous and always thankless service of critic and school-master, we can only account for a renewal of the request on the supposition that each writer deems himself or herself an exception to all necessary general rules.

It is, we suppose, just like each one's child; to say that that particular darling is not an exception to children in general is proof positive that we either know too little or know too much; but, when it happens that the number of bright particular darlings equal in count the aggregate of children *en masse*, we must, in sheer despair, find excuse in a class or "lump" classification for not praising every snub-nose, sausage-face epitome of humanity thrust into our arms for compliment and candy.

If writers will just imagine the similarity of situation with respect to contributions and babies they will see how impossible it is for us to consent to make exceptions to a good standing order. To "give reasons" is to embark on a sea of troubles that in time would wear away even the rocky heart of Shakespeare's "vexed Bermoothes." None of that sea for us in these perplexed days!

Sunshine Papers.

Know Your Own Door.

A MAN applied to a friend of mine, a day or so ago, for the privilege of varnishing, or oiling, her front door. He would do the work for a small remuneration, and so finely that "You won't know your own door, madam, when I'm through."

That would instantly settle the case for me, thought I. If you please, I prefer to know my own door. It would be rather awkward to be walking into other people's houses, without leave or license. Besides there are plenty of people in the world, now, who do not know their own doors; some, on occasion—some, the majority of the time.

Young scapegrace, across the street, frequently comes home in the "we sma' huts," with a very muddled consciousness regarding the exact locality of his own door. He always has a peculiar look the next morning. So peculiar, that you feel sure he made a fool of himself the night before. His eyes are red and heavy, he has a hang-dog way of carrying himself, and a generally dilapidated, headachy, shamed face about him. And his mother, herself, airs, and cleans, and arranges his room that day, and looks tearful and broken-hearted.

Mr. Ostentation, who lives up the street, and makes a great show of his prosperity, his charity, his stern morality, and his church connection, occasionally attends a committee meeting, or a board meeting, or a club meeting, where none of his strictly virtuous acquaintances may be found, and comes home decidedly at a loss as to where to find his own door. But, bless us! if any one hears of it they only smile, and say:

"Why it's nothing, my dear! They all do it! Just a few glasses too much of wine! A gentleman like him could not refuse to drink at a dinner, you know; it would look so vulgar and ill-bred! The very fact that he was so affected, shows that the good man was not accustomed to such excesses! Oh, it is not the least to his discredit!"

"So say we all of us," for Mr. Ostentation is rich; we like to associate with his handsomely-dressed wife, we like our children to be seen walking, arm-in-arm, with his children from school; we like to be invited to his elegantly-furnished home; we like to head our subscription lists with his large donations; we like to hear him denounce "wickedness in high places" and tell how he hopes that our city will select an upright man for the next mayoralty (meaning himself); we like to have him pay the largest pew-rent and largest premium for an uppermost seat in our special synagogue.

But, there is Mr. Lowly, lives around the corner. He has been out of work for eleven months; his family are getting awfully pinched for want of a sufficiency of food and clothing, and he is nearly desperate, as day by day goes by, and he can find no steady employment, where a moment of deep agony and dejection is invited to "take a drink," and with the idea of lessening, even momentarily, his mental anguish, he accepts. He comes home that night and does not know his own door. Before he finds it, he fumbles at the latch of Mrs. Loosetongue. She watches him through the upper blinds. The next day every one who ever heard of Mr. Lowly knows that he is a drunkard! (Odd, is it not? But no one was ever a drunkard that owned fifty thousand dollars!) One neighbor says—"I thought of giving him a place in my store next month, my porter is going to leave and I thought I might get Lowly at a little reduction; but, of course, I shall not ask him, now!" Another neighbor, declares—"I always thought they were low people; I shall forbid my children playing with the Lowlys any more!" This neighbor remarks, "I was going to give Mrs. Lowly quite a bundle of old clothing to make over for the family, but I must look out for some more deserving people, now!" And that neighbor asserts that "It is a disgrace to the locality to have that Lowly living here, and coming home so drunk nights that he cannot find his own door!"

In fact, they are all exceedingly neighborly! And they all forget that Mrs. Scapegrace's son often does not know his own door, and that Mr. Ostentation occasionally does not know his own door, and that they have some relative who has been known to get into a wrong house, or a station-house, over night, and that they, themselves—oh, pray whisper it!—once drank half a glass of ale and had to lie on the sofa for some hours afterward! But, then, we all know that forgetfulness is ever so much nicer than remembrance, upon certain occasions. Memories are as convenient little articles as ever were created; they seem to work by a double set of springs; you touch one set, and memory becomes excessively short, and narrow, and diminutive, every way; you touch the other set and memory instantly becomes inconveniently large.

But, altogether, not knowing one's own door, is a very bad state to be in—though if you are real rich you can buy plenty of excuses—and I would advise you, my friend, not to spend any money in a way which will result in such a deplorable degradation of your mental powers!

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

NEEDED WORDS.

"HONOR thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

From my childhood I have always been taught to respect the aged, and I just as willingly want to vote as to say harsh or cruel things against Grandma Lawless—bless her dear, good, honest soul! But, when I look about and notice how much disrespect there is shown to those whose heads are whitened by age, and the snappish way they are spoken to, and the spiteful way of it, it makes one heart-sick, and one longs to give these disrespectful of age a talking to, and sometimes I do so.

A very flippant young miss, who seems to imagine she is made of much finer clay than the rest of us "poor miserable creatures," possesses that hateful trait of not reverencing old age. I don't know but she considers that I should be put in a straight-jacket, or have my ears pulled for writing in so direct a manner as I do. Yet I don't care for that; I am strong enough to bear all the epithets bestowed upon me, but I will not stand calmly by and see the aged insulted. And that this saint-like miss does insult the aged, I have proof positive.

One day, when she called at the Lawless mansion, she was very free in her remarks, and was continually abusing an individual whom she styled "Old Moll," who appeared to have all the faults in the world. I was at a loss to know who "Old Moll" was; and, when I don't know all I want to concern myself with certain matters, I am prone to ask questions. The mystery leaked out, and "Old Moll" proved to be this girl's own grandmother.

I knew this grandmother, and I knew her to be a self-sacrificing, generous woman, who, deprived herself of many things that this very miss and her brothers and sisters—parents as well—might not suffer, and, had it not been for her, the whole tribe might have been in the poorhouse, long ago.

And if you upbraided this angelic miss with her conduct, she would say she "wished her grandmother was a Christian." Yes, that is the string she harps on all the time, in prayer meetin' and out of prayer meetin', until she seems to forget that she had best be minding her own business.

Not a Christian! Is it not Christianlike to help another, to work for others' welfare, to keep the hungry from starving and help to clothe the naked? And is this young miss a Christian? Her reply is that she is. Well, a great many of us imagine that we are actually the reverse of what we really are. But, is it Christianlike to treat with disrespect the aged, to sit at home in idleness while a poor old relative walks several miles to the store for necessities of life, that the younger members should obtain, then go to prayer meetin' and on the way home roundly abuse one's relations and neighbors? I don't like such Christianity, and I don't believe the Lord approves of it. There's too much cant, and too little justice in it.

Those who respect the aged cannot have very bad hearts; there must be some gems of goodness in their composition. I do so love to see people kind to and thoughtful of their elders, and I can't believe one is a whit the worse for showing this kindness, but I can believe they are made better. Remember, time flies and the years pass speedily away. It will not be long ere you and I, who are now young, will be aged and we'll want some one to make our departing years easier. We'll not want to be wished out of the way; we'll not want to think we are of no use; that there is no room for us; that every mouthful we eat is begrudged to us. I am sure I shall not. But, if we neglect those who are now old we must expect to be neglected when we, ourselves, become aged, and what a dreadful thought that! All our love for the old, our care for and attention to them, is never wasted; it will be returned to us, if not by them, by others; if not now, then in the future, when we shall have more need of it.

Why should we strive to make their life-paths thornier? Why put them in the shade when they need the sunshine? When gentleness pays more interest than harshness, why should we invest more in the latter than the former? These are questions which should come home to us, and can we answer them truly by saying—"because we think it is right we should do so?"

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Concerning Man.

MAN was one among the first human beings on the earth.

He was given dominion over all the beasts of the field, but it is fun to see him run away from a little yellow dog and yell "git out," and his influence on a cat-fight at night is very subdued.

Darwin says he was originally an ape. He was said to have been created perfect. He then has lost much of his original attributes.

There are a great many species of man. In fact, there are all kinds and other varieties.

He is endowed with great reasoning powers, yet for the life of him he cannot tell why the style of women's hats must change once every month. He is great at finding out, but he can no more tell why a woman must be amiable away from home and cross at home than he can fly—into a passion about it and make it any better.

The principal letter in the alphabet of his life is J, and it is always a capital; among the small letters he always places a.

He is called the lord of creation. If he has no excuse he can create one; he can create a dispute or a disturbance equally well.

Man born of woman and out of money is in a few days full of trouble.

Mankind is glorious, but man unkind is horrible to contemplate.

Man is said to be the author of his own misfortune. It is a large book; all rights (or wrongs) reserved by the author, as it is copyrighted.

He was given dominion over the fowls of the air yet he never put salt on a bird's tail, unless it might be a quail's on toast.

Man is endowed with a mind that is far above his neighbor's. He measures the distances of the stars and calls them by their wrong names; but his own ways are fast finding out.

Man in Massachusetts is the inferior being—a woman having the superiority by several thousand.

Man is supposed to be about six thousand years of age—enough years to last a man his lifetime.

Man is a strange animal, but it is not altogether known as being wild. If it exhibited any such symptoms its wife has been known to manage it with consummate tact and it has become pretty tame.

Man prides himself on the precedence of his birth, and loves to assure his wife that woman was made from a rib taken from his fore-

father's side, and as a consequence this has been the bone of contention, and not of content, ever since that important event. That bone has been the skeleton in many a house to this day.

When a man gets to thinking that he knows about all the little things pretty much that mortals were divinely intended to know, he can start a pretty good-sized lunatic asylum on his own hook without having to advertise for patients. Some men the older they get the more they don't know, and they are proud of it.

One thing that characterizes man, from all other animals is that he is capable of forming opinions of himself—and others; more of himself than others. His opinions of himself are his own and why try to despoil him of their comfort? A man has a right to think as much of himself as of anybody else, and he does it. Having originally lost a rib the chief end of man seems to be to get another rib, and then comes the rib-bone.

Man lives in the expectation of being somebody or somebody else, and is apt, if he strives, to make his mark—on every thing he touches, especially if his fingers are dirty.

There are seven ages of man; the crib-age, the cab-age, the non-age, the sauce-age, the break-age, the mar-riage and the dot-age.

Man from the earliest ages has figured pretty extensively in the history of various nations of the earth; he is pretty generally with the people, and is included among the masses; but a man is only a man when he conducts himself like a man and is known by his manners.

A man who will do unto a fellow-man what his fellow-man has done unto him isn't the smallest half of a man; but when his wash-woman sends home his week's washing with everything on them but the buttons he has a perfect right according to the latest revised statutes to relax a little on his manliness and modestly employ a reasonable number of Latin expletives—that is, if he reasonably thinks he can swear half the buttons on again.

Man is divided into two general classes, Big man and Little man. There are none of the latter class on this globe.

Man will take up arms in the defense of his home and boldly battle for it, sometimes even with his mother-in-law, defending his threshold against all invaders with heroic determination—unless it might be burglars, when in that case, he might fortify himself under the bed or serve as a rear guard to his wife.

Man is formed pretty much all over the face and the back of the globe, and in some parts of Louisiana, but the drunken man who lost his hat with the brick still in it which you light-heartedly but heavily footed kicked off the sidewalk on the first end of last April, you will never find, and you need not walk around on one foot to hunt him.

The boy is father to the man. This truth was forcibly impressed upon me when I read on a sign yesterday, "John Crinklepin and Father—Attorneys at Law." It seems reasonable beyond any number of doubts, because I know a good many boys who are older than their paternal parents.

Man is endowed with great perceptive faculties and can divine hidden things, but I'll bet the next dollar I make off my neighbor in a trade that there is not one man in a hundred who can wake up at midnight and guess within forty feet of just where his clothes are scattered; and at morning it looks like a man had been shipwrecked in a wind-storm. Man is of a high order but he lacks the order.

WASHINGTON WHITEKORN.

Topics of the Time

—A disposition to economize was never more favorably assisted by fashion than at the present time. It is not uncommon to see three different fabrics in one rich costume, and quite as different a liberty is permitted to the frugal mind bent upon making use of anything that is useful. Figured silks and plain black silks supply a handsome toilet for those who do not desire to go to the expense of purchasing embossed velvets, which appear in combination with plain silks, and the charming armure silks are supplying a need long felt in silk materials.

—The recent *hazing* expose with which Princeton College—staid old Presbyterian Princeton—regales us is a sad evidence of the combined inefficiency of a college faculty and the innate depravity of students. The Sophs brutally misuse a Fresh—so brutally indeed that his fellows, aroused to resentment, proceed in a body to the room of the leader of the Sophs and deliberately shave his head. He retorts, when released, by using a pistol, and the affair ends with his being shot and severely wounded. It is a disgrace that such a custom as *hazing* should be treated otherwise than with the severest penalty of the law against ruffianly assault, and we sincerely hope every boy in Princeton identified with the late outrages will be made to appease his appetite for "fun" inside of a prison-cell, where a six-months season of reflection may teach him that a young "gentleman" who is a ruffian is equally a disgrace to himself, his family and the college he discredits.

—The hue and cry against American fast life and the overwork and excitement that cause premature death is not sustained by facts. Men in the full vigor of their faculties are common enough at seventy. Here we have, of course, known to all, Henry C. Carey, William Cullen Bryant and Peter Cooper, still at work at the age of 85. And Mr. Cameron is in his 80th year, and by no means ready to fall asleep while his administration lasts. Horace Binney, waiting but three years of being a century, was recently buried in Philadelphia, after a very exciting and active life; and recalling other prominent men whose lives were active and laborious, there was Webster, who lived to 70 years; Clay, to 75; Benton, an additional year; Chief Justice Marshall, 80; John Quincy Adams, 81; Thomas Jefferson, 83; Lewis Cass, 84; and Chief Justice Taney, 87. The list can be easily extended, and the more it is examined the more fully it will be proved that American life is no more deadly than European, and that professional life has as good chances of continuance here as there.

—In Dr. Legrand's sketch of Christopher Columbus, published in the SATURDAY JOURNAL No. 342 (Sept. 30, 1876), it is stated that the great discoverer's remains were brought from Seville, Spain, as ordered in his will, and interred (January, 1795) taken up and transferred to the right side of the altar of the great cathedral in Havana, Cuba, with extraordinary and imposing ceremony. It has lately transpired that the whole reburial was an imposture, and that the bones of the admiral yet repose in their original resting-place. An English scientific man writes to *Nature*: "The remains of Christopher Columbus are to-day in Santo Domingo. Unfortunately I am not able now to send you the full data. Suffice it to say that the chain of all possible precaution, and has been verified with all possible precision. The chest was perpetuated by a then member of the 'Cabillo,' who had the knowledge, the tact and the unscrupulousness to perpetrate it successfully. The whole consular corps, all the Government officials and all the better class, alike of natives and foreigners, at the time in Santo Domingo City are witnesses of the authenticity of the 'find.'"

Readers and Contributors.

Accepted: "An Old Maid," "The Last of the Year," "A Poor Millionaire," "The Best of All," "When Daisies Come," "A Musical Motion," "How Many Lost," "Mary's Little Man," "The Lover That's True."

Declined: "The Doctor's Romance," "An Old Maid's Story," "A Space in the Air," "Do We Know?" "Mason Never Stole the Rocky John," "The Chinaman's Pappoose," "Big Biggin," "A Wonderful Boy," "When Jane meets Jane."

EXPLAINS. There is no "erasing fluid." An acid is used in erasing, and the acid is a very cheap, and chlorine is then used to bleach the discolorations. Your chirography is good.

TELEPHONE. Having had no practical experience with the telephone we cannot express our opinion. As it is coming into everyday use in the Departments at Washington, and is usefully applied elsewhere between offices and houses widely separated, we see no obstacle in its wide-spread adoption.

CLAY-MIND. There is no method of obtaining position of captain's clerk but by applying to ship-owner or captain. It is well enough to study navigation, but, in these days of steam, unless you really expect to sail a vessel, as an officer, you will not be called upon for much "sailor knowledge."

MRS. S. L. K. In your State a married woman can hold property in her own name, may make contracts, sue and be sued, and dispose of her property by will, and, in case of her death without a will, her husband is excluded from any share in her estate. Your husband's course, we should say, amounted to coercion. Keep your property rights in your own name.

PINEY-WOOD SCATCHEL. We have no means of knowing the price of land in the county named. Land in North Carolina is, as a rule, very cheap, and no State, we are told, offers greater inducements to colonies. Single settlers probably would find it rather lonely and isolated, and too remote from market. Should say, which there are no doubt, that you will be better suited in Tennessee.

ABRAHAM ROUND-THE-CORNER. Consult any school map. The Bosphorus is the river, or channel, leading from the Black Sea, to the sea of Marmora. The Dardanelles is the river or channel from the sea of Marmora to the Mediterranean. The two forts, at the Southern end of this channel, are really the true Dardanelles and from them the name is derived, and obtained its name. The term, Golden Horn, is applied to the harbor of Constantinople, which is a half moon in shape.

LITERARY. We do not remember to have seen Starr King's list of one hundred books for self-culture. We can guess what many of them must be. The list must be so chosen as to have each volume supplement another, to form a consistency of subject and information. We presume the Boston "Literary World" will give you the actual list if you suggest its publication. An excellent aid in, and guide to, the choice of books to buy and read is Putnam's Library Companion.

DOCKET No. 2. Take the candy to some chemist. The coloring matter may have been—probably was—poisonous, for candy makers do not scruple to use arsenical coloring matter. Many of the so-called aniline colors are poisonous. As sugar is sold at ten cents per pound, and the cheapest candy is sold from twenty to thirty cents, the profit is too great to excuse adulteration, yet enormous quantities of flour, corn-starch, white clay and gelatine are used by confectioners, and the candy is not excepted, not the rule, we are assured.

MIDDLEBORN NOT. Such a list of sketches as those you speak of ran through the Journal in 1876. Should recommend for you to get Higginson's "Youth's History of America," which is a very interesting work. The Turks were originally Tartars or Tartars. They are an Asiatic, not European race. A Turk not a Mohammedan would not wear a turban, and the most enlightened and best educated of the race—and many of them are well educated—are followers of the Prophet; hence their very civilization is antagonistic to European ideas. A Turk would either abjure Mohammedanism or leave Europe.

ANNESTATA. It is difficult to advise you. You certainly are entitled to a fair return for your labors. The idea of becoming a nurse is not a bad one if you can gain admission to a hospital, and if you suggest for you to write first to the directors of your own State Asylum, which each have their hospitals or sick wards; next, to hospitals in Philadelphia and New York, and then to the nearest considerable number; or, if no list of these is attainable, write to the Directors of St. John's Hospital, New York, and the lady directress may give you such suggestions or directions as will assist you in your work. Places are not easily obtained, but persevere. Would it not be better, after all, to start right out and learn the dressmaker's trade?

F. B. S. (Philadelphia). You can hardly expect anything but broken promises from a young woman of such character as to frequent the places to which you refer. No respectable girl, be she ever so poor and illiterate, but would shrink at the thought of being seen in such places of entertainment; and the fact that the girl to whom you refer has been in the habit of frequenting such places, and continues to do so, despite your advice, is a proof that she is an entirely unworthy your love. Only a complete reformation in her conduct, can make her worthy to become any respectable man's wife.

We would suggest that young men who desire to be like and modest girls for sweethearts, should be as careful in their own conduct, and as irreproachable in their morals, as their mothers, as they desire the women to be, whom they seek to marry.

A CONSTANT READER. (Atlanta, Ga.) writes: "Please be so kind as to answer the following questions: Give me a list of American Poets. The latest style in arranging a book is to give the names of the poets in alphabetical order, and to give the names of the poets in alphabetical order. Will you make the eyes sparkle? A remedy for weak eyes. And can you judge my character by my handwriting? It would be impossible, in a short space like this, to give you a complete list of American poets. Among the principal ones are Aldrich, Bryant, Alice Cary, Phoebe Cary, Will Carleton, Emerson, Bryant, Bret Hart, John Hay, Charles Fenno Hoffman, Harland, O. W. Holmes, Julia Ward Howe, 'H. H.' (Mrs. Hunt), Longfellow, Lowell, Lucy Larcom, Joaquin Miller, Adeline May, and many others. J. Howard Payne, T. Buchanan Read, Saxe, Mrs. Sigourney, Edmund C. Stedman, Swinburne, Bayard Taylor, Tennyson, H. D. Shore, Whitman, and N. P. Willis. And as to the matter of the hair upon the head as possible, and no false hair used. In front there is either a center-part, or it is combed straight back, with a fluffy fringe over the brow. Those ladies to whom high hair-dressing is not becoming, wear the hair in one or two broad plaits looped at the nape of the neck.—Address Secretary of Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y. Ring loaf sugar, with cologne or alcohol dropped on it, will make the eyes sparkle. Also soap-suds, made of Castile soap, fluted in the hair. The best remedy for weak eyes is pure Pond's Extract, diluted one-half with rain or soft water. Wash the eyes in this night and morning, and once or twice through the day. Never read while traveling, and do not use the eyes by any poor light, and avoid all fine print and dark work in the evening. If your eyes do not improve, consult a physician. We do not pretend to read character by handwriting, but your penmanship seems to indicate an independent, vigorous character.

KATIE L. writes: "Please tell me who were the Fates, and what they did? Who were the Graces and the Muses? Is Cecile a girl's name, or a boy's? I hope you won't think me so troublesome as to throw my letter aside." The Fates were three powerful goddesses, called by the ancients Parcae. They were represented as old women. Clotho held a distaff, and was supposed to preside over the birth of mortals, and spin the thread of their lives. Lachesis held a spindle, presided over the fate, and continued spinning the thread of life. Atropas held scissors, and presided over death, cutting the thread of life.—The Graces or Grætiæ, also called Charities, were the daughters of Jupiter and Venus. They were constant attendants on the beautiful Venus, and were, themselves, young, beautiful and modest. Their names were Aglaia, Thalia and Phœnoe.—The Muses, or Muses, were the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne. There were nine of these goddesses, Clio, muse of history, who was crowned with laurel, and held a trumpet in one hand, a book in the other; Euterpe, muse of music, and supposed to be the inventress of the flute and the lyre; Thalia, muse of comedy, who was crowned with ivy and held a scepter in her right hand, and a shepherd's crook; Melpomene, muse of tragedy, her garments were splendid, and she held a dagger in her hand, a scepter and crown in the other; Terpsichore, muse of dancing, of which she was considered the inventress; Erato, muse of lyric, tender, and amorous poetry; Polyhymnia, muse of singing and rhetoric, she was dressed in white, a crown of jewels on her head, and a scepter in her left hand; Calliope, muse of eloquence and heroic poetry; Urania, muse of astronomy, was dressed in azure, and held in her hand a globe and mathematical instruments. All of these were mythological characters, worshipped in ancient Greece. You should study mythology. It is interesting and instructive.—Cecile is a name used for both boys and girls; sometimes it is spelled Cecile for girls.—We are always glad to answer our correspondents with advice and instruction.—Instead of saying "I hope you won't think," etc., you should have written, "I hope you will not," etc. Won't is not a correct term to use under any circumstances.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

THE VILLAGE DEACON.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

In Church.
He shuts the church door, slow and sure,
And somewhat in a manner solemn,
As if to shut all sin without,
And up the aisle walks in a column.
He takes the corner of his pew
Which never can be filled by proxy,
He'd no more have a stranger there
Than new views in his orthodoxy.
He's had that seat for twenty years,
And worn out several pairs of cushions;
A stranger on the other end
Would interfere with his devotions.
The Sunday outside of his face
You see is most serenely frigid;
He always sits down with "ahem,"
A rule he sticks to very rigid.
He always coughs and starts the tunes,
And sings ahead for sake of leading,
And then blows his devotional nose
As satisfied with the proceeding.
The parson pictures torments dire
Far far below his spoken people,
And as he sees them going down,
His amens rise up to the steeple.
The hopeless bale of sinful man
When he shall call on rocks to grind him
The parson paints; the deacon groans
And quite wakes up the man behind him.
"But oh, the righteous shall find peace
And dwell in valleys growing greenly!"
He rubs the world's dust off his sleeve,
And then he strokes his beard serenely.
"Woe to the sinner in his way!"
The deacon sternly looks around him;
The slumbers of the good are sweet,
And soon we see that sleep has bound him.
The closing exhortation wakes
The deacon to take up collection;
The business-jangling penny makes
Sad havoc with his soul's reflection.
He leaves the church with stately step;
His cloak is on, and deftly covers;
He puts his hat on in the porch
And a few furtive glances suffers.
The inner life hath fed on thoughts
That make his heart of peate the winner;
The inner man, too, must be fed,
And so, his thoughts are fixed on dinner.

Out of Church.
When out the deacon drives a trade
With very rare discrimination,
And people say he's thriving well
All on his Christian reputation.
"He said the groceries which he does
Are not beyond himself in purity;
And then, he lends unto the poor—
At twelve per cent., and good security.
His week-day ritual is quite strong,
And little of the Sabbath fingers;
His dealings with the world are warm,
And people sometimes burn their fingers.
And neighbors round about him say
He'd be a model man on Monday
If, in the morning he'd put on
The suit of clothes he wears on Sunday.

Post and Plain;

Rifle and Revolver in the Buffalo Range.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

VI.

AFTER THE HUNT.

"That makes jest twenty-nine head," said Old Mart, thoughtfully, as he wiped out his long rifle and surveyed the old bull. "I've seen the time, and I'm 'most 'shamed to tell it, too, Launce, when I've counted nigh on two hundred buffler in a day killed from one stand by a feller I knowed."
"Where was that?" I asked.
"Down in the South Buffalo Range," he answered, "close to the pan-handle of Texas, in '73. They used to go out in parties, one to shoot, two to skin and one to cook, and by gosh, sir, the poor buffler had no peace of their lives. There wasn't a water-hole but had its party camped nigh it, and not a hide nor hoof could get to that water without gettin' shot. Man, dear, the very rivers was lined with the durned skunks, keepin' the poor critters from drinkin'."
"And what was the end of it?" I asked.
"The end was that, in '74, in places whar ye used to see the hull country black with herds it was white with skulls and bones, and to-day they've druv 'em all off for good."
"Then why didn't the government stop it?" I innocently demanded.
Old Mart laughed bitterly.
"Did ye ever know government stop a bad deed or help a good one, Launce? Not in this country. No, the buffler's gone, and in ten years more there won't be any. It's no use fur me to spare 'em. Some one else will kill 'em if we don't, so we mout as well hev some fun—hey, Launce!"
He was interrupted by the appearance of a train of lumbering, creaking wagons coming from the direction of the fort, attended by a guard of soldiers.
"Reckon they'll have plenty of fresh meat to last till nigh Christmas," said Mart, as he eyed the wagons. They won't waste much of those caridges, Launce. You note, sweet and clear, in the south-west.
"That's the boys," explained Mart. "They had a tooter along with them. Thur lookin' for camp. Out off your own tails, Launce, so nobody else kin claim 'em, for greenies at a buffler-hunt is the meanest cusses to steal I ever seen."
As he spoke a second bugle sounded from the head of the coming wagon-train, and I reflected that if I wanted to secure my trophies I had better do so. Mart lent me his big butcher-knife, and I quickly accomplished my task, coming out richer by five buffalo-tails than when I left the fort in the morning. I confess, however, that I felt prouder of the old bull that had cost me such a severe chase than of any of the rest. I had killed him like a sportsman kills, while I felt that the butcher-knife was most fit for the others.
Old Mart went round to the carcasses and had his bunch of five tails dangling by the tufts as the wagon-train came up.
"Let them carry the traps home, Launce," he said, dryly, as he took up his gun to move away. "Sojers is paid to do that kind of work. Me and you don't do it."
The old man had all the mixture of dislike and contempt felt by the average American mechanic for the common soldier, and yet it seemed to me that there was no occasion for the feeling. The men who came up were civil-spoken, intelligent-looking fellows enough, and when I pointed out the trail of my horse coming from where I had left my own dead buffalo, the sergeant told me not to trouble myself, that the meat should be recovered.
"Now, then, for the fort," cried Mart, and we set off for our walk over the frozen plain, following the back trail of the wagons.
Very soon we had topped one of the many imperceptible swells, and the wagons vanished from sight, when we again found ourselves apparently alone on the plain.
Not quite alone, however, as Mart soon pointed out. I saw something flit over the top of a swell in the neighborhood, and asked what it was. It was gone before I could see it fairly.
"Reckon a wolf," answered Mart, gruffly. "Thar's lots on 'em sneakin' round now. They smells the offal. The boys'll be fur runnin' 'em to-morrow, I reckon. Prime sport, Launce."
"What's prime sport?" I demanded.
"Why, runnin' wolves, in course! They does it at all the posts now, to keep themselves awake."
As he spoke, I saw a dark crack in the plain ahead of us, one of the numerous ravines that seem the landscape in the West.
"Bet thar's a dozen wolves in thar, waitin'," averred Old Mart, grinning.
We passed quietly on till we came to the ra-

vine, a seam about six feet deep at the head, but getting deeper as it advanced. Sure enough, there was a grand scurrying down below, and we saw the wolves running away like so many ewes.

Old Mart pitched his rifle to his shoulder, and sent a bullet flying after them, which elicited a shrill yell but no dead wolf.
"Durn the brutes," he said, shaking his fist at them. "They've stole too many of my brother-in-law's sheep for me to let 'em go. I hates every hide and hair of 'em."
It was the first time I had ever heard Old Mart Sykes mention himself or his belongings in any way, and I inquired:

"Where does your brother-in-law live, Mart?"

"He's a sheep-farmer down Kansas way, and I spent one season with him, 'bout four years ago. That's how I cum to know 'bout the plains. The cussed wolves would plague them sheep nigh to death—the varmints!—and we used to set up nights watchin' fur 'em, till I tho't my ha'r would turn gray. I lowed to love Mirandy Jane better'n any of my brothers 'n sisters, but I couldn't stand it forever, and as fur Lige—that's my brother-in-law, 'Lijah Horton he was—as fur Lige, he was a-growin' poorer all the time. Howsunder, we fixed 'em at last."

"How did you do it, Mart?"

"We made a bee of all the neighbors and a grand surround, and we counted nigh on twelve thousand wolves' heads that year, in Simmons county, alone. I tell you wolves was thick thar."

"I should say so, Mart."

"But that warn't nothin' to the time when they began to pay bounties fur wolf-scalps. They bust the treasury of Kansas and hed to suspend payment. There was seven million scalps brought in, one week."

The old hunter turned and looked me solemnly in the face as he told this tremendous lie, and he never blinked.

"And how much did they pay for each scalp, Mart?"

"Two dollars and a half," said Mr. Sykes, promptly.
"Then that was seventeen and a half million dollars paid out in one week for wolves?"

"Jest the ticket, Launce! It's a fine thing to be edicated—ain't it?"

"No wonder the treasury was bankrupt," was my only comment on the story, and I plodded on in silence.

The old man watched me furtively for a moment, and then said, in the same grave tone:

"But, the State didn't lose any money, arter all."

"Ah! how was that?" I asked, with an appearance of great interest, to see how the old fellow would answer.

"Well, ye see, all the wolf-hunters bein' flush of money, got on a bust—"

"Hold on, Mart. How many were there to share the money?"

"Wall, reckon 'bout a hundred."

"And each of them had a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars?"

"No," protested Mart, soberly. "I wouldn't tell a lie to ye, Launce. They didn't hev more'n 'bout a hundred apiece."

"Then they only killed twenty-five hundred wolves, Mart."

The old hunter scratched his head with a comical look.

"Do you make it that, Launce?" he demanded.

"Certainly. Hundred men at a hundred dollars, ten thousand. Wolves, two dollars and a half apiece makes twenty-five hundred wolves."

"Reckon you're right," admitted Mart, coolly; "but I allers makes it out seven million. Howsunder, every man o' 'em got on a bust and it all went back to the State, for the gov'nor was interested in the best barrooms in 'Tepka, whar they paid the money. Thar's old Nap, at last, I s'wore!"

He broke off to point at the fort, which lay right in front of us by the banks of the broad Missouri.

The lately turbid and rushing river lay white and silent before us, locked up for the winter. The frosty night had consolidated the floating ice, and the old ferry-boat had been hauled up the bank, while the rope no longer sagged in the water.

"I won't be safe to cross till to-morrow," remarked Mart, as he looked at the river. "Arter that the sleighs will be runnin' all the time. Hark! hyar's the boys back."

I became aware of a great crackling and tramping on the snow, some distance behind us, and we heard a cheery shout.

We looked back. The mounted buffalo-hunters were coming gayly toward the fort, headed by the Indian scouts, yelling and galloping to and fro, as they waved their trophies in the air. At the head of all was little Charley Green, flourishing a buffalo tail, and to all appearance frantic with joy. He came dashing up at full speed and screamed out:

"Hooray, Launce! I've fixed him. I've killed a bust!"

Charley was so proud of his feat that I had no heart to mortify him, and so listened attentively to his story of how he had picked out the bull all by himself and followed it till it dropped, firing twelve shots before he killed his game. At last he asked:

"How many did you kill, Launce?"

I showed him the bunch of tails.

"Five?"

Charley stared and his face fell. Then he turned.

"How many for you, Mart?"

"Twenty-five, 'twixt me and Jack Moore," said the hunter, soberly. "We mout hev hed forty, if we'd waited."

Charley whistled as he surveyed the great bunch of tails Mart showed him.

"Why, that's more than one whole party have got," he cried. "We had eleven hunters and only killed seventeen buffaloes."

"I told ye we'd beat ye," grinned old Mart. "Runnin' buffaloes good for sport, but a stand hunt's the thing for meat. How many did Cap Bullard kill?"

"He'll tell you himself," replied Charley, somewhat taken down in his enthusiasm by that count of tails.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 413.)

TIME'S MOODS.

BY ANNIE WITTON.

Oh, there are times when Heaven's sweet power Asserts o'er us its holy sway;
And at such moments—such an hour,
We can do naught but kneel and pray.
Love grasps the helm and turns our bark
As sweetly as a mother fond
Would lead her babe, till every chord
Within our erring hearts respond.

Oh, there are times when earth assumes
The aspect God would have it wear
To human sight; and Heaven illumines
The spirit's dream of mansions fair.
Our tenured natures loose their hold
As Heaven seems nearer and more near,
Our freighted bosoms grow more bold
Till trust has murdered every fear.

Oh, there are times we would not touch
A single fly to give it pain;
And then, again, the orphan's tear
Would not avail, but plead in vain.
For man is such a strange compound
Of good and ill, alas! one day
The summer sunshine lights his soul,
The next, cold winter holds full sway.

The Silent Witness.

BY C. D. CLARK.

It was a dark spot in the midst of the silent wood, a spot designed by nature for the plotting of a dark deed or its accomplishment. At the roots of a gnarled and knotted old tree two men stood in close conference. In this dark spot they deemed themselves entirely safe from eavesdroppers, and yet at times they started and looked about them, as if their plot were so hideous that the birds might whisper it.

One of the two was a ruffian, ready for any deed, no matter how base or cruel it might be—a dark-visaged, iron-jawed scoundrel, with a small, savage eye and a hang-dog air in keeping with his general appearance—a villain, and a villain whom the world had not used well.

His companion seemed out of place with such a man—a tall, handsome person, dressed in the extreme of fashion, and having all the easy grace of a man of the world, yet there was a

perate deeds and received little punishment unless the stern hands of the Lynchers were laid upon them. To reach Wolf Gap, a dark mountain pass, and in its shelter do the deed for which the price of blood had been promised, was Bruff's object now. He knew the history of these two brothers, so like in every feature, but so utterly different in character—the one a man of honor, who was loved by all, and the other a dissipated gambler. Again and again had the elder brother lifted Harry out of the mire and set him on his feet, and perhaps things might have gone on in this way for years had they not both loved the same woman, who knew the gold from the dross. And this night the "else brother" was leading the man who had slept in the same cradle with him to a sudden and awful death in the solitude of the mountain pass.

They had spent the afternoon at the Edgeworth plantation, and in the cool evening started to ride home, jesting as they bade adieu to Norah at the door. And as Harry Eaton surprised the look of tender confidence which passed between his brother and the woman he loved, he ground his teeth together savagely.

"Bid her good-by!" he muttered. "It is the last farewell unless Bill Bruff should play me false, and if he does—"

They rode on, a black grove following close behind.

"I am glad to have you alone with me, Harry," said the elder brother, "because I have something to tell you. Do you know that Norah has promised to be my wife?"

"I thought as much," replied Harry, bending his head low to hide the demonic expression which came into his face. "I am glad to think that to-night ends it."

"I'll do the fair thing by you, Harry," said Alfred. "I'll give you the north plantation if you'll promise never to touch the cards again."

"Anything you like, I'll promise," answered Harry. "At there's Wolf's Gap ahead. A fine place for an ambush on a dark night."

"There is no danger now," replied Alfred, as he dashed into the pass closely followed by his brother. "I've seen the time, however, when Wolf's Gap was not a pleasant place to ride into."

It was a dismal spot, indeed. On either hand rose the precipitous sides of the pass, covered with ragged bowlders, among which grew almost impenetrable cover. Alfred dashed in gayly, thinking of no danger, when there started up before him a masked man, with a heavy revolver in his hand. Without a word he leveled the weapon and pulled.

Had been a soldier, and, quick as thought, he caused his horse to rear and receive the bullet in his breast, and he fell, unluckily catching Alfred's foot between his body and the ground, and for the moment the young man was helpless. With a bitter oath the assassin pointed his weapon again and pulled the trigger.

Just then there came a cry from a woman's lips, and a light form flitted between the assassin and his victim.

His finger was on the trigger, and the bullet

"Then, good-day to you; and when all is over, and the king has his own again, come to me and I'll double the money. By the way, where's Alice?"

"No matter. She's a good girl, is my Alice. Too good for such a father. And let me tell you, once for all, that the man that does her wrong, I don't care who he is, I'll kill him like a dog."

The tempter gave him an uneasy look and turned away, while Bill stood looking after him with a moody face.

"If I thought the dog had it in his heart to harm Alice," muttered the hardy villain. "I'd cut his throat before he was out of these woods. But, pshaw! he means well enough."

He turned on his heel and made his way through a narrow tangled path to an opening in the woods, in which stood a rude log cabin. Yet, in spite of its dismal situation, some attempt had been made to render it attractive.

The open space in front was laid out as a garden, and in the little beds bloomed many flowers which had been tended with patient care; and as Bill came brushing through the underbrush a slight girl, with the face of an angel and eyes of heaven's own azure, sprung suddenly out of the open door and threw herself into his arms.

"Oh, father!" she cried. "You will not do it; you will not! If Harry Eaton hates his brother, if he plots against him because their father loved Alfred best and would not trust a dissipated gambler—"

"Death, girl!" he cried. "What do you mean? You are raving, mad. What have you heard? What do you know? There, there, Alice, get supper, and say no more, for you do not know what you are talking about."

"Father," continued the girl, lifting her earnest eyes to his, "I have heard you say before now that you loved me. When I have heard men speak hard of you, I have defended you. But, what I heard Harry Eaton say—"

Bill Bruff caught her by the arm, dragged her into the cabin, and pushed her into a seat.

"Let me hear no more of your ravings, my girl," he said, in a snarly tone. "I have always loved you, and I'd lay down my life for you any day, but I'll not bear your insults."

"It is because Norah Edgeworth loves Alfred best that he seeks his life."

"Norah Edgeworth has taught you to hate your father and to insult him to his face," cried Bruff. "You have spied upon me, and now take the consequences."

He dragged her into a small room at the back of the house, hurled her in angrily, and closed and locked the door. Then, hurrying out, he brought a horse from a low shed behind the house, flung himself into the saddle, and rode furiously away.

It was a time and in a section of Kentucky in which the law had little force. Men did des-

perated, only to find a lodgment in the bosom of the girl.

"Father, you have killed me!" cried the girl. "You have killed your Alice!"

The man gave a terrible cry, like that of a wild beast brought to bay, and springing forward, regardless of all else, he caught the wounded girl in his arms. But she was dying; the coral lips were fast taking on the ashy hue of death.

"I forgive you," she gasped. "You did not mean the shot for me, and I have saved Alfred's life. Lift me gently, father. I am going to my mother."

A fluttering sigh, and the spirit of the lovely girl had fled forever.

Bill Bruff laid her gently down, and catching up his revolver, he turned suddenly upon Harry Eaton.

"You found?" he cried. "You brought this upon me?"

Both fired together. Harry threw up his arms and fell from the saddle, dead before he touched the ground. Bill Bruff stood like a statue, his hand still extended, and then sunk slowly down. By this time Alfred was on his feet, and a weapon in his hand.

"Don't shoot," said Bill, faintly. "I've got my ticket—that man here, dead before he touched the ground. Bill Bruff stood like a statue, his hand still extended, and then sunk slowly down. By this time Alfred was on his feet, and a weapon in his hand."

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